

The idea of a brochure outlining opportunities for careers in cell biology was first put forward in the context of this symposium. Birgit Satir took on the responsibility for writing “Cell Biology: A Guide to Opportunities.” The guide provided a brief introduction to the history of and current opportunities for new discoveries in cell biology, as well as information about training and job opportunities (including likely salaries) in cell biology. It was published in 1969 and, in a letter to the membership on 25 June 1969, ASCB Secretary George Pappas reported that they were filling orders rapidly and “undoubtedly there will have to be another printing.”

The young society clearly struck a chord with a significant number of researchers, including many just beginning their careers. Winston Anderson, for example, commented, “Consider the national environment during this period – the ASCB was only 2 years old, and the founders, including Fawcett, Palade, Porter, and Swift, ruled supreme. We were all caught up in this national enthusiasm and as cell biologists considered ourselves ‘cytonauts’ – exploring the cell – discovering and defining, rediscovering, and redefining the structure and functions of organelles” (2000, p. 795).

Although it is beyond the time focus of this book, a survey of the membership of the ASCB in 1976 provides a good sense of how the organization grew during its first fifteen years. The survey was sent to all 2959 members of the ASCB in 1975; 1584 useable responses were returned. The membership was overwhelmingly white and male, although 23% were women. Over half had received their Ph.D. in the last ten years, and 69% in the last fifteen years. Universities and medical schools employed 75% of the members – 65% of those mainly on soft money.

3. CONCLUSION

The two brief historical sketches in this chapter are intended to illustrate the sort of decision making activities that go into establishing scientific institutions.²⁶ The founders of both the *Journal of Biophysical and Biochemical Cytology* and the American Society for Cell Biology were explicitly attempting to shape the discipline of cell biology. In both cases, the founders worried about being predominantly focused on morphology or tied to electron microscopy as a specific technique. Accordingly, they adopted a variety of

²⁶ I do not take this case to be unique. For example, in describing the founding of the American Physiological Society, Toby Appel (1987) showed how the founders set out to restrict membership to scientists publishing research in physiology, but also drew broad boundaries for the discipline of physiology.